Minutes of a Meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council

held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Milford Haven

on Monday, 23rd February, 2015 at 7:00 pm

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PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor E. R. Harries)

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor S. G. Joseph)

 Councillors: A. E. Byrne J. W. Cole

 A. W. Eden W. D. Elliott

 M. H. George QGM Mrs. J. Hawkins

 M. J. Norman M. P. Rickard

 C. A. Sharp D. R. Sinnett

 G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons)

 TO RECEIVE CHIEF INSPECTOR AMANDA DIGGENS, DYFED-POWYS POLICE, AND MR. RICHARD BROWN, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND CIVIL CONTINGENCIES, PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TO DISCUSS CCTV IN MILFORD HAVEN:

The Mayor, Councillor E. R. Harries, welcomed Chief Inspector A. Diggens, Dyfed-Powys Police, and Mr. R. Brown, Head of Environment and Civil Contingencies, Pembrokeshire County Council, to the meeting.

Mr. Brown said that, first and foremost, the Final Report entitled “Review of CCTV provision within the Dyfed-Powys Police area” reflects very well on Pembrokeshire, which he feels has been lost in the press reports.

Mr. Brown advised that the Pembrokeshire County Council is part of a community safe partnership, which encompasses a Working Group specifically for CCTV covering the whole of Pembrokeshire.

Mr. Brown explained that 4 or 5 years ago this Group examined all the cameras in the County to determine their performance. As a consequence of that survey, a number of cameras in Milford Haven were updated approximately 3 years ago. The Milford Haven Town Council pays for the broadband rentals that gets the images back to where they can be monitored.

 Mr. Brown said that the Crime Commissioner’s report very strongly advocates that the Police and the Crime Prosecution Service both feel that CCTV cameras are a very useful and very strong tool in crime prevention, crime detection and conviction.

Mr. Brown stated that what was found not to be of particular use in an area like Dyfed-Powys was 24-hour a day monitoring of the cameras. People might question the use of the cameras if they are not being watched. The cameras can be pointed in a specific direction. The approach being taken in Pembrokeshire is that the cameras are pointed on the basis of information from the Police as to where they are going to have the greatest benefit.

Mr. Brown referred to the headlines which stated that Powys has removed its cameras, without making any difference. Powys, however, does not have the same issues as Milford Haven or Haverfordwest, with their busy town centres.

 Mr. Brown said that he considered that, on both a personal and professional level, it would be the wrong course of action for the Milford Haven Town Council to stop funding the line rental of the cameras. He believes that the cameras offer a genuine advantage to Milford Haven that has not been communicated to Members as well as it should have been. He considers that there is a benefit in what this Council is contributing to – safeguarding the community of Milford Haven.

 Chief Inspector Diggens said that from a police perspective she could not emphasise strongly enough how valuable officers find CCTV. They are extremely grateful for the CCTV facilities.

She stated that she was recently talking about CCTV to one of the Sergeants who works at Milford Haven Police Station. This Sergeant equated CCTV to a watch on your wrist – if you do not have it then you certainly realise how often you want it, and he said it is really difficult to encapsulate in evidence the amount of use officers have of CCTV.

Chief Inspector Diggens said that she would have liked to be able to present Members with lots of statistics on how CCTV has led to ‘x’ number of convictions but it is quite difficult for the Police to capture that sort of information. Their information does not record in a way that they can research databases to extract the outcome of CCTV.

Chief Inspector Diggens advised that Police Officers make regular use on a daily basis of CCTV cameras to assist them with a large range of enquiries.

Chief Inspector Diggens read out a report in which she provided specific examples illustrating the type of investigations that CCTV evidence supports. She explained that:

* CCTV evidence capturing footage of crimes in progress has been used to assist with the identification of witnesses and suspects leading to prosecution and conviction of offenders.
* In circumstances where CCTV evidence has not captured footage of the actual crime in progress, it has often been used to identify suspects on route to or from a location, providing circumstantial evidence, such as presence in an area at a particular time which has assisted enquiries leading to the detection of crimes.
* CCTV is a valuable tool assisting officers with missing person enquiries. The police regularly receive reports of missing persons, many of whom are classified as vulnerable. For those missing persons who are classified as vulnerable it is particularly important to be able to locate them as soon as possible to protect them from harm, and the footage from CCTV cameras is a key line of enquiry that is regularly used for this purpose.
* CCTV has been used recently to capture evidence of crime and disorder that has been attributed to particular public houses in Milford Haven. CCTV has provided key evidence that has been presented at reviews leading to amendments to pub licence conditions, resulting in a reduction in the number of crime and public order incidents.
* CCTV has been used to capture evidence of driving offences, leading to identification of vehicles/drivers involved, and used to support prosecutions leading to conviction.

Chief Inspector Diggens concluded by informing Members that the CCTV cameras in Milford Haven are a valuable tool, that are used regularly and on a daily basis by officers to support the effective investigation and prevention of crime and incidents of anti-social behaviour.

 The Mayor thanked Mr. R. Brown and Chief Inspector Diggens for their very comprehensive presentation.

The Mayor then asked Chief Inspector Diggens to forward a copy of her report to the Clerk in order that it could be referred to the appropriate Committee for further discussion. Chief Inspector Diggens indicated that she would do this.

 The Mayor asked if Members had any questions.

A Member said that he totally understands the significance and importance of CCTV in crime prevention, crime detection and securing convictions. He is, however, aware that technology is advancing continually and questioned whether the 5 CCTV cameras of particular interest to this Council are providing a clear image that can be produced in Court to help secure a conviction.

Mr. Brown replied that 3 years ago when the location of the cameras was reviewed, Police Officers were consulted and the CCTV cameras funded by this Council remained in the list of priority areas. The image quality was assessed, and cameras and/or the video recorders were replaced if necessary. The cameras are regularly checked by an Officer who visits Police Stations checking for the quality of the images.

The Member then asked what the CCTV Camera in Gelliswick Road that costs approximately £1,400 per annum for broadband has led to in terms of crime prevention or securing a conviction.

The Mayor gave examples of when the CCTV Camera in Gelliswick Road was beneficial.

Mr. Brown was asked where the monitors were located and whether they are manned 24 hours a day. Mr. Brown explained that the monitors are located at Milford Haven and Haverfordwest Police Stations. They are not being monitored 24 hours a day. If there is an incident, an Officer is deployed to check CCTV. CCTV is monitored if there is a particular event. The images are retained for 30 days.

Chief Inspector Diggens said that CCTV can also be used retrospectively as well as live time, for example, if someone comes back from holiday and discovers they have been burgled whilst they are on holiday.

A Member asked as CCTV is of value to the Police, whether the Dyfed-Powys Police Authority would consider funding it if this Council did not. Chief Inspector Diggens replied not as far as she is aware.

Mr. Brown was asked whether Members could be assured that if a camera is not fully utilised, as it may be in a location that people do not visit or visit infrequently, this Council would be advised in order that the camera could be moved to a more appropriate setting.

Mr. Brown reiterated that the Pembrokeshire County Council reviews the cameras on an ongoing basis. Recently, the Pembrokeshire County Council has been looking at using a wifi radio system, instead of cables. This has been unsuccessful as technology is not advanced enough to make this viable. Mr. Brown believes that technology will advance, and then the Milford Haven Town Council will no longer have to pay any line rental for the cameras.

Mr. Brown said that he would check that all the cameras funded by this Council are situated in priority locations.

Mr. Brown was asked why the line rental for the cameras are charged at different prices. He explained that the cost of the fibre optic lines are set up by BT Redcare.

A Member asked whether the images from CCTV cameras on the Port of Milford’s land were available to the Police, particularly in view of the Port’s Masterplan. Chief Inspector Diggens said that she will investigate this and speak to one of the Officers being deployed at Haverfordwest Police Station, who is an Architectural Liaison Officer and will be assisting with the development.

The Mayor thanked Chief Inspector Diggens and Mr. R. Brown for attending the meeting. He explained that this issue would be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. They left the meeting at this point.

 PRAYERS:

Prayers were led by the Mayor’s Chaplain, Father Harri Williams.

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The formal meeting of the Milford Haven Town Council then commenced.

262. APOLOGIES:

 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. M. Bedford, Mrs. R. Gray,

1. H. Miles, Mrs. Y. G. Southwell and Mrs. C. Stevens.

Councillor D. R. Sinnett joined the meeting after the presentation by Chief Inspector A. Diggens and Mr. R. Brown.

263. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 21ST JANUARY, 2015:

 RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of

 the Milford Haven Town Council held on the

 21st January, 2015, be accepted and that

 they be signed by the Mayor as a true record.

264. INFORMATION FROM THE MAYOR:

 (a) Mayor’s Engagement:

 Members were informed of the Mayor’s Engagement since 13th February, 2015.

 21st February - Launch of Persimmon Homes Event

 (b) Letter from the Clerk of Stackpole and Castlemartin Community Council:

 Members were circulated with a copy of a letter from the Clerk of Stackpole and Castlemartin Community Council, in which she expressed her Council’s grave concerns at the closure of the outstation Registration service in Pembroke Dock, and requested that the service remains open, even if it is only for one day a week.

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REPORTS ON COMMITTEES

265. PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE:

 The Minutes of the Meeting of the Public Works and Planning Committee held on the 9th February, 2015, were moved by the Chairman, Councillor M. P. Rickard.

 (a) Minute 249 (a) – Planning Application No. 14/0985/PA - Extension of the existing Dock Wall and erection of a Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure) Marina Services Building and associated works at land at Milford Dock, Milford Haven:

 Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) declared a personal interest in this issue as he is an employee of the Torch Theatre. He took no part in the voting.

 A Member noted the contradiction in the recommendations made in Minute 249 (a) and Minute 250, and that in Minute No. 249 (a) the Public Works and Planning Committee had approved Planning Application No. 14/0985/PA which included the demolition and relocation of the Grade II listed former Docks Office Building.

 A Member explained that the Port of Milford Haven had submitted various planning applications. He referred to recent correspondence from a resident of the town in which she referred to the importance of the former Docks Office Building to the heritage of the town.

After some discussion, it was proposed and seconded that a vote be taken on this recommendation. A vote was taken and it was RESOLVED THAT the Public Works and Planning Committee’s recommendation be overturned by 8 votes to 4, and the above numbered planning application be refused as the Milford Haven Town Council does not support the demolition of the former Docks Office Building.

 (b) Minute 250 – Planning Application No. 14/0785/LB – Demolition of Grade II

 Listed Former Docks Office to facilitate the primary access to the proposed mixed use redevelopment of Milford Dock at the former Docks Office, Milford Haven:

 Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons) declared a personal interest in this issue as he is an employee of the Torch Theatre. He took no part in the voting.

 As there was an element in this planning application regarding the demolition of the former Docks Office, a vote was taken and by 7 votes to 4 it was RESOLVED THAT recommendations (i) (ii) and (iii) be deleted and replaced with the recommendation that the Milford Haven Town Council does not support the demolition of the former Docks Office Building.

 (c) Minute 252 – Variation of Premises Licence:

 The Chairman of the Public Works and Planning Committee, Councillor M. P. Rickard, said that after consultation with his Committee, and based on insufficient information from the Pembrokeshire County Council, he had recommended that the variation of premises licence be refused.

 RESOLVED THAT, subject to the above, the Minutes

 of the Meeting of the Public Works and Planning

 Committee held on the 9th February, 2015, be

 approved and adopted.

266. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE:

 The Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on the 12th February, 2015, were moved by the Chairman, Councillor G. Woodham MBA (Open) LL.B (Hons).

 (a) Minute 257 – Review of Milford Haven Town Council’s Fidelity Guarantee Insurance, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders:

 RESOLVED THAT Paragraph 8.3 of the Financial

 Regulations be amended to read:

 “as another layer of protection, the Clerk is to show

 the Mayor every bank statement which he/she will

 inspect and sign”.

 (b) Minute 258 – Discussion on setting up a Facebook page for the Milford Haven Town Council;

 Councillor M. P. Rickard declared a personal interest in this issue, as he uses

 Facebook, and supports it as a form of communication.

Councillor M. J. Norman was congratulated on his framework report on social media.

 RESOLVED THAT:

 (i) a Facebook Working Group be formed;

 (ii) as discussion on the membership of this Group would

 normally be referred to the Finance and General

 Purposes Committee, Standing Orders be suspended

 in order that membership of the Facebook Working

 Group could be agreed at this evening’s meeting;

 (iii) the Facebook Working Group is to consist of the

 following Members:-

 Councillors A. E. Byrne

 W. D. Elliott

 M. J. Norman

 M. P. Rickard

 C. A. Sharp

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